CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. In a Chinese character input method wherein Chinese characters are defined as key sequences and selected by matching a given sequence against the set of predefined sequences, wherein the improvement comprises a sequence comparison method in which a key or consecutive run of keys from one sequence is considered a match to a key or consecutive run of keys in the other sequence in accordance with a predefined mapping of keys and runs of keys.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising a method of comparing a given sequence to a predefined one wherein, without the use of a designated 'wildcard' symbol, a match is achieved when the given sequence only matches parts of the predefined sequence.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising a method of encoding Chinese characters as text strings of another language wherein certain letters used in an encoding are defined to carry certain positional information relating to the components of the Chinese character represented by the encoding.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising a method of specifying a Chinese character encoding as a text string of another language wherein certain letters present in the

specifying string are defined to bear special instructions for the method of claim 1.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising defining each letter of the English alphabet as a representation of one or more Chinese language strokes, stroke combinations, or radicals, as depicted in Figure 1.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising a selection technique whereby a set of candidate characters is displayed for user selection by the user entering a symbol which serves as an identifier of the desired candidate wherein the set of identifier symbols overlaps the set of symbols used in defining the Chinese characters themselves, including the character(s) used as termination of the definitions.

7. In a Chinese character input method wherein Chinese characters are defined as key sequences and are selected based on matching a given sequence to the set of predefined sequences, wherein the improvement comprises a character identification method in which certain strokes and components of the Chinese written language are respectively mapped to certain keys, and in which a Chinese character is identifiable by a plurality of key sequences where the variation among the sequences are solely the result of representing a component contained in the character as a single key or a sequence of keys representing strokes and/or sub-components contained in the component, in accordance with the predefined mapping.